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President: Mr. Opertti ..... (Uruguay)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 24 (*continued*)

Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, including measures and recommendations agreed upon at its mid-term review

Progress report of the Secretary-General (A/53/390 and Add.1)

Mr. Azaiez (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): The delegation of Tunisia, which associates itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, would like to share some remarks on agenda item 24, on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), including measures and recommendations agreed upon at its mid-term review.

I should like first of all to pay tribute to the interest shown by the international community in the development and growth of Africa. UN-NADAF has crystallized the commitment of the United Nations to the economic emancipation of the continent.

This programme constitutes a renewal of the commitment of the Member States of the Organization to support African development efforts. For all the African States it is a sign of faith and hope that, despite the vicissitudes of the international situation and the difficulties of our time, encourages them in their struggle for development.

Consideration of this item by the General Assembly allows us to take stock of progress made since the mid-term review two years ago. It also gives us an opportunity to identify the major difficulties confronting the implementation of the New Agenda and to re-examine our approach in planning new measures prior to the review and final assessment in 2002.

The periodic review of UN-NADAF thus allows us better to target the goals to be achieved and, if necessary, to adjust our sights if the economic situation of African States remains fragile overall, and even if Africa appears to be starting on the road to recovery.

Indeed, for the first time in more than two decades, per capita income throughout the continent rose in 1995. This trend continued in 1996 and, to a lesser extent, in 1997.

Without being excessively optimistic, as some have been, it can be noted that this improvement is accompanied by a notable decrease in inflation and a reduction in budgetary deficits. For some African countries this is also accompanied by an increase in foreign direct investment flows.

The results achieved have been brought about by better budgetary discipline, the implementation of good macroeconomic policy, the restructuring of banking and

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financial systems and regulations and the strengthening of the capability and transparency of administrative and judicial institutions.

Thus, analysing the issue of the use of domestic resources together with the continent-wide economic reforms, the report of the Secretary-General (A/53/390) points out that 22 countries in Africa now have agreements with the Extended Structural Adjustment Facility of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The report adds that these structural reforms have been multisectoral. They have been aimed at the development of the agricultural sector, diversification of exports, strengthening the role of fisheries and forestry, improving and rationalizing the civil service and increasing the output of the energy sector.

The programmes of reform and structural adjustment in which the countries of Africa are engaged have thus combined measures for domestic economic and trade liberalization, improvement of financial management, expansion of the tax base and modernization of the effectiveness and transparency of the taxation system.

Also regarding reforms, and aware of the primary role of civil society in ensuring the success of any measures for recovery, the African countries have stepped up the democratization process and the strengthening of the network of civil organizations within the framework of good governance.

Whether we speak of economic reform, the promotion of the private sector and foreign direct investment or of the intensification and strengthening of the democratic structures of society, all these efforts are aimed at the establishment of a more attractive environment for capital flows and official development assistance.

The progress report of the Secretary-General on the mobilization of additional resources for African development (A/53/390/Add.1) would, however, seem to indicate that the African countries have not succeeded in reversing the negative trend and that the continent still is not particularly attractive for foreign investors. Indeed, the document notes that the net flows of resources destined for Africa have decreased and also that the donor countries have reduced their loans. Furthermore, the latter are counting on the private sector to provide the developing countries with the financing they need.

What is more disconcerting is that the decline in Africa's share in this dwindling aid has come at a time when Africa's economic growth was in fact picking up, following major reform measures implemented by the African countries. As a result, the report concludes, the issue of resource flows to Africa is an ongoing concern for the United Nations and for the international community.

It is quite clear here that the magnitude of the problem and the complexity of the obstacles the continent must overcome to build the underpinnings of its infrastructure and its socio-economic development require considerably greater resolve and greater dedication of resources, at both the national and international levels, to guarantee Africa, like other regions of the world, sustained and lasting growth and development.

It must however be recognized that the action being taken at present, both by the industrialized countries and by the United Nations system, is far from commensurate with the problems facing Africa. These shortcomings are clear in official development assistance, in investments and in the treatment of the debt problem.

The same progress report of the Secretary-General points out that the greater share of private capital flows for the developing countries has in fact not reached the African countries, which received only 3.4 per cent of the total in 1992 and 2.7 per cent in 1996.

The marginalization of Africa in the area of direct foreign investment is comparable to its marginalization in global trade. This situation is of particular concern.

The progress report also notes that over-indebtedness is one of the major obstacles to economic recovery and sustainable growth in Africa. Indeed, it is the African countries that, among the developing countries, have the greatest external debt in terms of the ratio of external debt to gross domestic product and its debt service ratio.

Recent progress in the international strategy of debt relief for the heavily indebted poor countries will undoubtedly make itself felt, but clearly there will be a need to do even more for middle-income African countries.

In this context, we believe that urgent measures should be taken designed to enhance the flow of capital towards the countries of Africa. These measures should be accompanied by relief for the external debt burden of the African countries, thus allowing them to move from the stage of adjustment to that of development.

It is the duty of the international community to support the efforts made by Africa to diversify its economy and thus allow its people no longer to be dependent on the exports of one or two commodities for which prices fluctuate depending on the market.

In this respect, I would like to refer to the report of the Secretary-General on estimates of resource requirements for the implementation of UN-NADAF, which emphasizes in its conclusion that

> "the rigid international economic environment, the domestic economic hardship and the lukewarm disposition of some creditors to adopt radical measures have constituted obstacles to the mobilization of financial resources and to the development of Africa". (*A/51/228/Add.1, para. 53*)

The same document also states,

> "Nor can Africans and the international community afford to see yet another international initiative for Africa's socio-economic recovery and development fail." (ibid.)

In endorsing this conclusion and expressing its appreciation for the numerous initiatives for Africa stressed by the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of UN-NADAF, Tunisia would like in particular to hail the efforts made by the Government of Japan to help Africa, which were crystallized in the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) and TICAD II, which the capital of Japan hosted a few days ago.

Finally, regarding the growing number of programmes for Africa, my delegation would like to emphasize the need for drawing up an approach that would take up the question of sustainable development of the continent in a global and harmonious framework. That vision could, at the same time, maintain the individuality and independence of the programmes. It is necessary to create a synergy between the international and bilateral initiatives under way in order to ensure their success, optimize their results and focus them on priority areas identified by the African countries themselves.

Mr. Ka (Senegal) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation associates itself with the statement made this morning by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and with the statements to be made later in the debate by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and by the representative of Burkina Faso on behalf of the group of African States.

Eight years ago, the General Assembly adopted resolution 46/151, which established the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), following the failure of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, which had been adopted four years earlier.

On the principle that responsibility for African development lies with Africans themselves, the New Agenda defined a compact under which Africa and the international community made specific commitments. For their part, the African countries were to undertake a series of political and economic reforms intended to promote and strengthen democratization, to mobilize internal resources in order to lay the foundations for sustained economic growth, to incorporate environmental and demographic elements into their development policies, and to pursue the process of regional and subregional economic cooperation and integration.

The international community in turn undertook to support those efforts by adopting concrete measures to resolve the problem of indebtedness, to mobilize additional resources for official development assistance, to support the diversification of African economies, to bolster regional economic integration, and to reduce or even eliminate tariff and non-tariff barriers affecting the export of African products.

Those in essence were the terms of the shared responsibility under UN-NADAF as outlined in resolution 46/151 and its annex.

The mid-term review conducted at the fifty-first session unambiguously acknowledged the sustained endeavours of African countries over the preceding decade both on the political level, with a further broadening of the democratic experience, and on the economic level, with implementation of strict structural adjustment programmes with social consequences that were at times hard to endure. Those efforts were coupled with the progressive development of an internal climate conducive to the spread of national private initiative and direct foreign investment.

For the great majority of African countries, the time has come to expand the policy of liberalization, the

simplification of administrative procedures and fiscal reform.

Here, the report of the Secretary-General contained in documents A/53/390 and A/53/390/Add.1 detects encouraging signs in the analysis of the progress made by Africa. We note with interest the emergence of a number of components of what has been called the African renaissance, which is marked by a considerable reduction in budget deficits, an average annual growth rate of 4 per cent to 5 per cent, increased budget allocations to the social sectors, and cuts in military expenditures.

Continent-wide, in addition to the process of integration introduced with the entry into force of the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community, the promotion of peace and stability remains a high priority for Africa, as reflected in the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. But these achievements should not be the trees that prevent us from seeing the forest. African economic recovery, while most discernible, remains fragile when viewed in the light of what remains to be done. A few of the areas that are of continued concern to African leaders are combatting poverty, mobilizing domestic savings, providing basic social services such as health and education for all and controlling population growth. These concerns are compounded by the threat of marginalization resulting from globalization. In this connection it is easy to see Africa's growing fragility; today, Africa's share of world trade is stagnating at the very low level of some 2 per cent in spite of efforts by Africans to make their economies competitive.

What can one say about the contribution of the international community in terms of support for UN-NADAF? The facts paint a rather unsatisfactory picture in at least three crucial areas. The first is the debt problem. For nearly all African countries, the debt burden remains a very serious obstacle to economic recovery efforts. Taking 1995 as a reference year, the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa notes that

> "To service this debt fully, African countries would have had to pay to donors and external commercial lenders more than 60 per cent ... [of] revenues generated from their exports." (*A/52/871, para. 93*)

The objectives of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative are commendable, but the Initiative remains limited in terms of conditions for eligibility, modalities for implementation and inadequacy of funding. In fact, only a comprehensive approach can be significant in satisfactorily addressing the African indebtedness as a whole.

The second area is the mobilization of resources. It must be said that the continuous decline in official development assistance to unprecedentedly low levels does not conform at all to the terms of reference of UN-NADAF. It is proper to acknowledge and welcome the efforts made by specific developed countries that have reached or even exceeded the goal of allocating 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance. But overall, the mobilization of resources remains one of the main weaknesses in the implementation of UN-NADAF, especially since Africa has thus far attracted only a very small share of direct private investment.

Lastly, in the area of trade, the steady erosion of the preferential margins accorded to developing countries under the Generalized System of Preferences results in huge losses in export income, thus adding to their trade deficits.

The 1998 *World Economic and Social Survey* also indicates in this regard that in several countries, adjustments in foreign trade, far from expanding income and employment, have on the contrary caused them to shrink. Africa is not immune to this worrisome assessment.

The debt problem, the low level of resource mobilization and unequal trade: the approach taken to these three major issues will determine the success or failure of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s when it is evaluated. There are ways to resolve them; all that is needed is the political will. The international community has risen to more complex challenges.

Ranging from the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAAERD) to UN-NADAF, and including the United Nations Special System-wide Initiative on Africa, advocacy for Africa has taken several different forms over the past decade. The time is ripe for action in a spirit of partnership, because ultimately Africa's recovery will benefit not only Africans but also their partners in terms of investment opportunities and capturing market share.

This is Senegal's understanding of partnership for development. We must meet and come together in a process of give and take. Let us then all join together to ensure that when it comes time for the final review of UN-NADAF, it is spared UNPAAERD's unenviable outcome.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): Two weeks after the conclusion of the extensive and fruitful debate that the Assembly devoted to the general situation in Africa and to consideration of the far-ranging report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict in Africa, the Assembly is again focusing its attention on that continent, which is courageously facing up to a plethora of complex challenges and which, we are convinced, has the capacities and means necessary for its recovery.

Indeed, our Organization's interest in Africa dates back longer than just a few weeks or months. It is reflected in the many initiatives that have been launched by the United Nations system, in particular by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and even by the General Assembly itself, as in the case of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). We are considering today the implementation status of the New Agenda and the modalities for relaunching it on a fresh basis, in the light of the Secretary-General's often wise and specific recommendations.

It is important to recall at the outset that when it was launched, UN-NADAF was proposed, submitted and accepted as a genuine partnership agreement between Africa and the international community. The African countries acknowledged that they bore the primary responsibility for their own development. For its part, the international community undertook to support Africa's efforts, in particular through the effective promotion of an international environment conducive to the recovery and accelerated development of the continent.

The mid-term review of the implementation of this 1996 agreement led us to make two major observations that remain fully valid and relevant today. The first one is that the African countries, despite the endless difficulties confronting them, have demonstrated beyond the shadow of a doubt their effective commitment to that partnership by embarking on bold, though socially costly, political and economic reforms designed to promote democracy and a state of law and to improve and liberalize their economies by giving the private sector a greater role in their development policies.

Secondly, the support provided by Africa's partners for the efforts of the Africans has been inadequate — and even, in the end, negative — in particular in the areas of foreign debt and of official development assistance.

This dual observation is largely justified and has been confirmed in the important recommendations made following the mid-term review, which formally, and with an increased sense of urgency, reminded the international community of its responsibilities vis-à-vis Africa.

Likewise, the progress report that the Secretary-General submitted to us today (A/53/390 and Add.1), and his tireless efforts to place Africa at the top of the list of priorities of the international agenda, confirm the need for enhanced support to Africa from the international community in this recovery effort.

However, it would be wrong to minimize or ignore the efforts already made by some of Africa's partners in many areas, in particular through official development assistance, debt relief or the opening of markets to African exports. It is true, however, that these efforts are still clearly insufficient in view of the enormous needs of the continent and its development imperatives.

Africa is facing a continual decline in official development assistance, and its debt burden — which in 1996 represented 67 per cent of the gross national product — is suffocating. Africa is also contending with a very limited and poorly allocated flow of foreign direct investment, a strong dependence and an extreme vulnerability in the area of commodities, a minuscule rate of participation in world trade, and rock-bottom social development indicators. Clearly, the African continent is hobbled by considerable handicaps that are impeding its efforts to lay a solid and lasting foundation for its development process.

While certain African countries have registered positive achievements, it is clear that the 4 per cent average recorded in 1997 for the entire continent is still far from the 6 to 8 per cent required for the development of the continent. The international community's commitment to Africa must remain strong.

Africa must first and foremost rely on itself, and it is doing so with great faith and determination. But at this critical juncture of the development of international

economic relations, in which a frenzied globalization that knows no rules or bounds is rendering it more fragile and vulnerable, it must also benefit from the support of its partners throughout the world so that its recovery is not jeopardized but supported, in a manner that will allow its necessary and inevitable integration into the world economy to take place gradually and fairly painlessly.

Two major themes in the relations between Africa and its partners should continue to command our attention in this context: resource mobilization and the coordination of the multiple initiatives on the continent.

Regarding the mobilization of resources, it is worth emphasizing that while Africa is aware of the work it must do on the domestic level, the means to do it have been reduced. This is because domestic savings have objective limits that depend first and foremost on the balance of trade with the rest of the world, and because this trade is so pathetic, it obviously does not provide the means for dealing with the enormous needs for development financing. Therefore, given the lack of external support in the form of official development assistance, massive foreign direct investment and concessional capital flows, the situation regarding the mobilization of resources is not likely to improve, and the prospects for development and recovery will thus be negatively impacted.

As for the multilateral and bilateral initiatives in support of the continent, we are pleased that they are many and varied. Nevertheless, as the Secretary-General himself points out in his report, at least for the moment their lack of effect stands in contrast to their number. Therefore, it seems to us that there needs to be a major effort to coordinate and harmonize these initiatives, including those of the United Nations system, so as to derive the greatest possible benefit from them and to avoid squandering the means and resources of which Africa has such great need.

The sectors in which UN-NADAF seems to be stalled or losing momentum are the very ones that the Secretary-General identified in his report on the causes of conflict in Africa and for which he called upon the international community to provide support. While awaiting the final evaluation of the implementation of UN-NADAF, expected in 2002, it is essential that this support crystallize quickly and that the solidarity of the international community not merely be limited to declarations of intent.

For its part, Africa is determined to continue to take charge and redouble its efforts to succeed in entering the new millennium and becoming integrated into the global economy, so as to ensure for future generations the living conditions and security to which they have the right, and so that the continent can take its rightful place in the council of nations of the world.

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (*interpretation from French*): The Secretary-General has submitted to us a remarkable progress report on this important issue before us today: the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, including measures and recommendations agreed upon at its mid-term review. We would like to congratulate him and all the experts who assisted him in mastering such a difficult and delicate subject.

It has now been two years since we conducted the mid-term review of the implementation of this programme — two years during which the global environment has undergone profound changes, not the least of which is the unprecedented crisis that today is shaking the foundations of international economic and financial cooperation. The challenges of globalization and liberalization of the economy — already so difficult to meet for developing countries as a whole — are even greater no doubt for the African countries, most of which are numbered among the least developed countries. It is in this context of economic depression that we should today approach the issue of the development of the continent on the eve of the twenty-first century.

The mid-term review has provided a means for calling attention to the large and often painful sacrifices made by the African countries since the beginning of the decade in their quest for a better future for the African peoples, and also a means of stressing the slow pace at which part of the international community is meeting its share of the responsibility it assumed in this regard.

To give new impetus to economic growth and to the lasting development of Africa, pertinent recommendations have been made to African States, our partners and the United Nations system. Of course we are still a long way from the final assessment, which will only be drafted in 2002, at the time of the final review and evaluation. But it is nonetheless still possible to glean the main trends to date in the actions of all the various actors since 1996.

We have stated repeatedly that the African countries are the first and the main architects of their own destiny. Aware of this fact, these countries have always implemented the most difficult initiatives and undertaken the essential political and economic reforms, with a view

to bringing about a stable, sound and thus forward-looking domestic climate.

Thus, to reinforce their capacities, they have enhanced the integration of women into the development process, strengthened agricultural development and environmental protection, further diversified their exports, improved energy sector earnings, strengthened the effectiveness and transparency of their fiscal systems, rationalized their public administration, promoted the private sector and intensified diplomatic processes. These are absolute priorities in their development programmes. Further, their commitment to regional and subregional cooperation and integration is more visible than ever — the achievement of these objectives being considered the first and most important stage in eliminating trade barriers and giving the continent effective access to the opportunities of the global market.

But despite all of this, the basic problems remain because nearly 300 million Africans still live below the poverty line. One quarter of the children do not have access to schooling; for half of our populations potable water remains a luxury; and health for all in the year 2000 is still just a slogan.

We have a clear awareness of our part of the responsibility for this state of affairs, and accepting this responsibility, we are firmly resolved to redouble our efforts to place Africa on the path towards true endogenous development, provided that the international community helps us in dealing with certain economic and above all structural obstacles that greatly handicap us in this undertaking. Basically those obstacles are: globalization, the debt burden and the drying up of assistance.

It has by now been established that Africa is the continent in which the effects of globalization are the most vicious and bitterly felt. The Secretary-General most aptly recalls this in his report:

> "Generally, globalization tends to intensify the marginalization of those countries without the capacity to increase exports or to attract investment rapidly.
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> "In the case of Africa, globalization in the short term has led to significant marginalization of the continent. Africa's exports remain narrowly based on primary commodities, and little progress has been made in diversifying into non-traditional exports, especially manufactures." (*A/53/390, paras. 87 and 88*)

The gravity of the situation could not be better expressed.

And what can I say about the debt burden, this ball and chain that, if we are not careful, could forever frustrate all of our efforts towards economic recovery and thus perpetuate the vicious circle of dependency? Aware of the importance of this dynamic, the Secretary-General in his report on the cause of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa has made most relevant recommendations for how to deal with it.

Together with this, other initiatives, some of which showed their limitations early on, were launched, but without success.

However, the only viable solution for Africa remains the simple cancellation of the debt stock, and the poorest countries should be given this benefit as soon as possible.

The third obstacle, and not the least, is the decline in resources allotted to development. It is not only that the rate of domestic savings is insufficient but also that the rate of investment remains low, well below the level needed for satisfactory growth. Furthermore, Africa's share in the total net flow of resources to developing countries has been diminishing from year to year in a disturbing way.

These realities, to which the Secretary-General draws attention in document A/53/390/Add.1, should alone have prompted a decisive reaction by the international community, which is at times ready to act to contain less dangerous crises. These realities should have reminded the international community of the commitments undertaken at the time of the establishment of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), which were reaffirmed in 1996 when we renewed our common political will to implement the New Agenda.

Thus, we are somewhat surprised to see the dwindling of official development assistance, which is the only source of financing that, a priori, does not require reimbursement. This is all the more inexplicable since African countries, through their courageous reforms, have achieved goals that should logically have encouraged an increase in official development assistance. One can therefore wonder whether there is a genuine will to finance development in Africa.

This does not mean that we do not recognize the sincere and manifest commitment of certain countries whose policies in resolute support of cooperation for development have allowed them to reach, and even exceed, the goal of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance. We are deeply grateful to them, on behalf of the men and women whose daily existence was improved thanks to the inestimable contribution of these friends.

To reverse the present trend in the area of assistance, the Secretary-General is recommending solutions that we fully support.

The fate of UN-NADAF is also in the hands of the United Nations system, whose capacity for coordination and mobilization in this regard is crucial. Nevertheless, the time has come for the United Nations system to undertake a thorough and objective analysis of all the agendas, initiatives and plans and programmes of action for Africa, which continue to multiply, and the apparent spontaneity of a number of them could lead us to think of fads and opportunism.

It is important to clarify the ties between UN-NADAF and the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict in Africa. This would have the advantage of avoiding the acrobatics we had to do to make the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa the instrument for implementing the New Agenda. At the global level, the need for harmonization of initiatives is also imperative, lest their impact be reduced to a minimum.

The new partnership we desire must be oriented towards the real needs of Africans and the priorities defined by them. Such an initiative would be the cornerstone of the economic summit that Africa plans to hold in 1999 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. The idea of holding such a summit proves that the problems of development remain Africa's first and foremost concern.

Mr. Sharma (India): May we compliment the Secretary-General for undertaking a thorough and thought-provoking analysis of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). We have read the documents with great interest and believe that they must be viewed in conjunction with the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871). We stated, when the General Assembly considered the latter report, that it succinctly brought out the complex interplay of factors, forces and events that have had an important bearing on developments in Africa. This applies equally to the report contained in document A/53/390 and its addendum, before us today.

Africa and India are bound by ties that reach far into history. Indeed, geo-historians tell us that India was but a part of that great continent before continental drift created the Indian Ocean. Africa and Asia have been bound by ancient and widespread commercial links, exchange of ideas and people and, in the shared experience of the colonial period, collective disempowerment, deprivation and exploitation. When we gained freedom, both India and countries of Africa faced mammoth developmental challenges.

Our first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, referred to these shared aspirations when addressing the first Asian-African Conference at Bandung. He said,

> "We have been left behind in the race, and now we have a chance to make good. We have to make good rapidly ... [I]f not, we shall fade away, not to rise again for a long time to come. We are determined not to fail. We are determined, in the new phase of Asia and Africa, to make good."

It is this shared promise that drives us as we take the floor on issues of concern to that brotherly continent and people.

We share the views of the Secretary-General, expressed at the very beginning of his report, that one of the critical issues that hinders the implementation of the New Agenda relates to the impediments encountered in increasing financial flows to countries of Africa. We have said before that the best of intentions and goodwill have to be matched by the provision of adequate resources that not only are sufficient for the implementation of the New Agenda for the development of Africa, but that lead to a per capita growth rate in gross domestic product of over 8.6 per cent per annum, judged to be the minimum required for an effective fight against poverty in the African continent. This is indeed the crux of the problem.

Other countries around the globe have suffered from a similar situation and can easily identify with the challenges facing Africa. However, as we had occasion to state last year when commenting on the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, the crucial difference is that while a devastated

Europe received a generous and sustained infusion of capital under the Marshall Plan, resurgent Africa has seen prospects for its development and growth denied by a paucity of financial resources. The totality of this challenge needs to be addressed comprehensively, effectively and urgently.

Seven years ago, in 1991, we had estimated Africa's external finance requirements at $30 billion for 1992, to be followed by an annual increase of at least 4 per cent. Today, for several reasons, the needs and urgency are far greater. This concern is shared by the international community. But still, as the Secretary-General notes, the net aggregate flow of resources to the African continent continues to decline, from $28.2 billion in 1995 to $20.8 billion in 1996, representing barely one third of the total estimated requirement of $60 billion.

The African continent remains a net transferor of resources abroad in the form of net factor incomes less public grants from abroad. As a proportion of domestic savings, such transfers have amounted to over a quarter of domestic savings, which at 15.6 per cent during the period 1992-1997, are low to begin with. This results in a reduction of net domestic resources available for investment, demonstrating compellingly the critical importance of external resources for achieving accelerated investment and growth in Africa.

We have noted the emphasis on increasing the level of domestic savings and resource mobilization for growth. This is a laudable objective. Policy issues related to raising domestic savings rates have not only been an integral component of the current reform programmes, but were also an important component of the conventional development policy of the 1950s. But caution is needed lest increased domestic savings have a recessionary impact by curbing domestic demand. Furthermore, it is important to analyse the reasons for the fall in the gross domestic savings rate from 25.9 per cent in 1976-1983, to 17.7 per cent during 1984-1991, to a further 15.6 per cent in the period 1992-1997.

We need to ask whether these poor savings rates and almost continuous decline do not reflect the structural constraints of these economies. After all, there can hardly be any savings at subsistence levels. Policy options available to these countries for increasing domestic resource mobilization are also limited. It is believed that reform programmes aimed at macroeconomic stabilization, financial discipline, reduction of fiscal deficits and transparent and predictable tax regimes will usher in an economic environment in which private agents can plan their future with confidence and contribute to increased savings. But such actions, in the absence of growth, may have an adverse impact on social development. Furthermore, the psychological impact of "debt overhang", with the concomitant expectations of increased taxation in the future, is an important factor.

Development assistance represents a trickle into the African continent. It is indeed distressing to note from the reports before us that the share of African countries, and in particular the sub-Saharan African countries, in official development finance has been declining, especially at a time when these countries stand poised for growth. Donor attention appears to be diverted from the African continent. The decline is even more serious as it takes place in an overall climate of shrinking resource flows, leading to a decrease in official development assistance directed towards Africa, not only in percentage, but also in absolute terms, from $18.4 billion in 1994 to $15.4 billion in 1996. Sectoral distribution of official development assistance has also been changing, while bilateral and multilateral donors alike shift away from productive sectors and physical infrastructure projects. It is important to make social sector investments and undertake capacity-building projects in other sectors.

We support the call of the Organization of African Unity for international support, including through the United Nations system, for greater investments in the education sector. At the same time, physical infrastructure is an essential component of a viable economic environment that inspires confidence for investment and growth. We share the views of the Secretary-General, expressed in paragraph 46 of document A/53/390/Add.1, that, "without appropriate development of infrastructure, even private capital may not flow in", and that, in any case, it would be necessary to develop such sectors with public funds.

We have also noted that nearly 5 per cent of official development finance is now provided for emergency assistance. This amounts to a diversion of whatever scarce resources were available for development. Africa hosts the largest number of refugees and displaced persons in the world, which places a severe strain on the economies of the host countries. It would be essential for the international community not only to increase official development finance for Africa, but also to provide additional resources for its humanitarian and emergency needs. We therefore strongly support all the

recommendations contained in the document on meeting aid targets and improving aid coordination.

Ratios of external debt to gross domestic product and a high debt-service ratio continue to characterize the economies of several African countries. Clearly, dwindling social spending is largely due to the rising claims of interest payments on public debt. As a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) study noted last year, sub-Saharan African Governments transfer to their Northern creditors four times what they spend on health care for their people. That is when debt is not being fully serviced. In order to fully service the debt, estimated at $328.9 billion in 1995, African countries would need to earmark as much as 60 per cent of their total export earnings. As former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere so poignantly asked: "Must we starve our children to pay our debt?"

The international community has been alive to this issue. We are happy that some of the actions recommended by the Secretary-General have already been implemented. These include the extension of the expiry date of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt (HIPC) Initiative from September 1998 to the end of the year 2000 at its review in September earlier this year. We are also happy to note that another African country, Mali, apart from the four mentioned in the reports, reached the decision point last month to avail itself of debt relief under the HIPC Initiative.

We are also encouraged by the World Bank assessment that, over the coming year, another seven African countries — Chad, Ethiopia, Guinea, Mauritania, Niger, Togo and Sierra Leone — could reach decision points, though not all would be expected to require assistance under the Initiative. However, as noted by the African Finance Ministers, more flexibility needs to be shown in the application of the criteria of the ratio of total debt in net present value terms to exports and due consideration must be given to the fiscal burden of debt, so as to allow as many African countries as possible to take advantage of the facility. We also support an expeditious examination of the Secretary-General's earlier proposals to convert to grants all remaining official bilateral debt of the poorest African countries.

It is abundantly clear that most of the increase in private capital flows to developing countries has bypassed Africa. Private loans have virtually ceased for Africa and the total outstanding short-term private debt was over $6 billion less in 1997 than it was in the early years of this decade. While this may improve the debt-servicing profile, it actually demonstrates the inability of financial markets to restore normal credit relations with African countries. Similarly, the total foreign direct investment inflows into Africa have also been fluctuating and modest. By no stretch of the imagination can these flows fill the potential investment savings gap that exists in Africa. However, every little bit helps. Despite our constraints, we have therefore established a Rs 1 billion — approximately $30 million — revolving fund for Africa for promoting trade, investment and technology sharing, as well as for revitalizing our bilateral trade and investments with Africa.

Permit me to also voice our full support for the recommendations of the Secretary-General calling on capital exporting countries to eliminate any restrictions, formal or informal, on capital exports to African countries. The international community must also consider ways to reduce the volatility of capital flows, through better surveillance mechanisms, to avoid the Asian type of financial crisis.

We strongly believe that without growth there can be no sustained increase in household or Government spending, in private or public capital formation, in health or in social welfare. After all, distributive justice cannot imply distribution of poverty, just as sustainable development cannot mean sustaining conditions which keep a people in poverty and deprivation. We have noted from the report that poverty eradication is treated as a cross-cutting issue, with emphasis on the progressive use of micro-credit as a means to empower the poor. We have also read with great interest the publication entitled "Poverty eradication in Africa: selected country experiences". As the Organization of African Trade Union Unity, whose secretariat is in Ghana, points out on page 119 of that publication, in its case study,

> "Under the pretext of the ongoing globalization of the world economy, we, in Africa, have noted with dismay the absence of good global governance and management of the international economy."

Globalization represents one of the most important challenges facing Africa today. While it offers access to large financial savings, new markets and a wide range of goods and services at lower costs, it also increases the vulnerability of countries and of sections within them. In the case of Africa, it is apparent that globalization has led to the significant marginalization of the continent. We have therefore been impressed by the commitment of our

partners from Africa to developing skills for understanding and directing international economic policy, so as to better serve their needs, as brought out in the studies published by the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries.

Mr. Mungra (Suriname), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We welcome the activities conducted by various parts of the United Nations system to implement the New Agenda for the Development of Africa. Activities that we would like especially to mention include the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) regional initiative entitled Enterprise Africa, aimed at facilitating and coordinating support for small and medium-scale enterprises; the deposit mobilization programmes of the International Monetary Fund Institute; the promotion of informal sector employment-generating opportunities by the International Labour Organization; the assistance provided by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the International Trade Centre in the trade sector; the establishment by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) of cleaner production centres in Tanzania and Zimbabwe; UNIDO's Alliance for Africa's Industrialization; the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Special Programme for Food Security; the joint programme of rehabilitation of schools undertaken by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNDP and the International Foundation for Education and Self-help; the "roll back malaria" initiative of the World Health Organization; and the advocacy role of the United Nations Population Fund with parliamentarians and decision makers.

We concur on the need to promote export-led growth in Africa. Africa's share of world exports remains low, at only 2.2 per cent. Most African countries remain dependent on single commodity exports. Declining terms of trade therefore need to be effectively addressed. In fact, it has been variously estimated that as a result of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations, Africa stands to lose up to $1.2 billion every year. Many have attributed Africa's trade marginalization to the absence of transformation of production in these economies from reliance on primary products to producers of high-income-elasticity goods demanded by the world economy. In the absence of this transformation, economic management prescriptions can produce only marginal improvements in exports. Infrastructural constraints, low-value addition within Africa of its exports and lack of capital, technology and communication networks are hardly amenable to short-term policy manipulations and will require sustained investment of external resources. Furthermore, on the demand side of the equation, rising levels of protectionism in developed country markets, frequent and unjustified use of anti-dumping duties and countervailing measures, tariff escalation and tariff peaks work to negate comparative advantage and competitive advantage of enterprises. At the same time, in some ways access to markets is also a basic competitiveness issue, dependent on the stage of development and sophistication of manufacturing structures. The international community will therefore need to act in concert to ensure that market access for products and manufactured goods from Africa is available as an integrated element of the process of Africa's development.

India has always attached the highest priority to its cooperation with Africa. A primary instrument of our technical cooperation with the countries of Africa has been the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme (ITEC). About 20,000 foreign nominees have received training in India under that programme in diverse fields, covering banking, foreign trade, hydrology and water resources, communications, electronics, satellite imaging, agriculture, small and medium industry, software, renewable energy sources and others. We provide a total of 1,350 training slots every year in our best institutions, and nearly 60 per cent of these are reserved for nominees from African countries. ITEC also implements technical assistance projects. They include the upgrading of hospitals and the establishment of rural health centres and an eye clinic in Ghana; the establishment of demonstration farms in Burkina Faso, including the supply of 200 tractors; office computerization work, the establishment of solar energy lighting systems and the establishment of agricultural, entrepreneurial and technical development centres in Senegal; a maternity clinic and an advanced technical demonstration centre in Namibia; technical assistance and consultancy projects in Mauritius; and feasibility studies for a small-scale industry park and for a mini-hydroelectric power plant in Uganda and for low-cost housing in Uganda and Rwanda. A manufacturing plant for poultry vaccines is also being established in Mali. An Informatics Training Centre for Africa will also be established in Zimbabwe. India has also pursued South-South cooperation through innovative modalities such as triangular cooperation. An example is the food security project in Eritrea, which will be implemented with technical assistance from India under the FAO Special Programme for Food Security.

India is also closely involved with the regional cooperation efforts in Africa. We concluded a cooperation agreement with the Southern African Development Community in October last year. We propose to considerably enhance our mutually beneficial links with other African regional and subregional organizations. India also participates actively in the African Development Bank as a full member.

Cooperation between the private sectors of India and the African countries is growing at a vibrant pace. Several joint ventures in manufacturing sectors have been established by Indian private sector companies in Africa. In certain sectors, such as railways, Indian industry is involved in a major way in the development of African infrastructure.

We have noted the improvements in coordination within the United Nations system of activities for the implementation of the New Agenda. However, the crucial issue of ensuring full ownership through the involvement of all recipient countries, as mentioned by the Secretary-General, deserves the highest priority. As has been observed, for far too long outsiders have looked not for Africa in Africa, but for their own obsessions, enthusiasms, phobias, hopes and interests, and obviously these are what they have found. We need to move away from prescriptive formulations and, instead of advancing alien solutions, respect priority areas identified by the African countries themselves and determine areas of focus and concentration through this interchange. Furthermore, as the Secretary-General pointed out in paragraph 103 of document A/53/390, these initiatives should set clear implementation criteria and mechanisms to ensure that they are free from undue conditionalities. Only then will we be able to reverse the candid and justified assessment of the Secretary-General that the initiatives of the international community have so far had only a limited impact on African development and the New Agenda.

We are convinced that given Africa's resources and limitless potential it has the capacity to emerge as a major global force in the coming century. Given the well-known determination and will of the African countries, what is needed is the willingness of the international community to come forward in true partnership for economic development. We harbour optimistic hope for the future. India would be privileged to be a partner in this great and historic enterprise.

Mr. Suh Dae-won (Republic of Korea): My delegation would like to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on this agenda item, in which he elaborated the current progress in the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), as well as the obstacles we must overcome.

The economic crisis during the past few months has clearly demonstrated the negative aspects of the globalization process. The crisis has given rise to a broad range of in-depth discussions focused upon the international economic system and on ways to ameliorate it. In the rapid process of globalization, the marginalization of Africa has been accelerated. The resolution of this problem will require a strong partnership between African countries, donors and the United Nations development organizations. No one will gain if Africa is left behind in the process of development. The recent economic crisis has taught us the lesson that the problems of a region certainly have repercussions for the rest of the world.

A comprehensive and holistic approach is required in addressing the critical issues contained in the New Agenda for the Development of Africa. Africa's development activities must be centred on the creation of an enabling environment for capacity-building. Peace and stability are prerequisites for sustainable development. In this regard, my delegation highly appreciates the Secretary-General's report on "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa" (A/52/871). We believe that the discussions in the Assembly on this issue a few days ago, under agenda item 164, were substantial and timely. It is with a holistic approach in mind that the Republic of Korea is carrying out its economic and development assistance to Africa and taking part in peacekeeping operations in sub-Saharan Africa.

As the mid-term review of 1996 indicated, the New Agenda for the Development of Africa clearly identifies key priority areas and signals in which direction future development cooperation should be headed. Nevertheless, we are concerned that its implementation is lagging. In particular, mechanisms to monitor and evaluate field-level implementation must be established. Indeed, the successful fulfilment of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa depends upon the efficiency of field-level coordination and the clear identification of implementation criteria. This is why we believe monitoring and evaluation are of crucial value.

My delegation concurs with the recommendation in the Secretary-General's report that the General Assembly must further consider the implementation of the New Agenda before the final review and appraisal. We are of the view that an independent evaluation of the implementation of the Agenda must be carried out with a view to facilitating an in-depth final examination.

Further efforts are required to harmonize various international and bilateral initiatives on African development in order to achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness. We believe that the New Agenda should be the leading instrument in strengthening compatibility among the currently existing development initiatives. We hope that bilateral donors and development agencies will improve the overall efficiency of their development assistance by focusing on the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, the implementing arm of the New Agenda.

With regard to market access, which represents an important element of the New Agenda, my delegation would like to stress the need for further discussion on the substantial implementation of the results of the Geneva high-level meeting on the least developed countries, held in October last year.

In this context, my Government, in cooperation with the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries, is planning to host the Forum on Asia-Africa Cooperation in Export Promotion, in Seoul, from 7 to 9 December this year. The purpose of this Forum is to seek ways in which the two regions could maximize mutual benefits of trade, thereby better and more actively preparing ourselves for our futures in the context of the globalization process. This is an integral part of our efforts to explore the potential of South-South cooperation.

The discussions on trade promotion, foreign direct investment and market access are crucial for the African region to overcome marginalization and to actively participate in the global economy. We therefore believe that the Seoul Forum will provide specific contributions for the implementation of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa.

This year the Republic of Korea, despite its current economic difficulties, has been providing $2.3 million to 23 countries in Africa in the form of projects, procurement, development surveys and dispatch of experts. We have also supported the establishment of the United Nations Technology Centre for Africa and Internet facilities for the Economic Commission for Africa, through the contribution of the Korea-Economic Commission for Africa Cooperation Fund, in the belief that information technology will play an important role for the development of Africa in the new millennium.

In closing, we would like to emphasize once again that UN-NADAF is not the concern of African countries alone. The Republic of Korea will remain committed to the expeditious and successful implementation of the New Agenda.

Mr. Shen Guofang (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): Over the past year, the Asian financial crisis and its impact have been the dominant topic at multilateral economic forums. Given the trend of economic globalization, this is certainly both natural and necessary. However, we should not forget Africa.

Thanks to the untiring efforts of a vast number of African countries, the economic situation in Africa has shown some improvement over the past several years. But the overall economic picture on the continent still looks grim.

The gap between the level of development in Africa and that of the world is still widening. Even if the current growth rate is maintained, it will still take more than 10 years for Africa's per capita gross domestic product to regain its 1980 level.

Poverty is still ubiquitous. In some African countries, people living below the poverty line make up more than 50 per cent of the overall population. Such indicators as the proportion of the population without access to basic health and medical care and the infant mortality rate are much higher in Africa than the world average.

The debt burden remains heavy. The overall volume of external debt for African countries in 1996 amounted to $324 billion, equivalent to 70 per cent of their gross national product for the same year. Their precious resources have to be used for debt servicing instead of being invested in national development.

There is still a severe shortage of development funds. Official development assistance to Africa dropped from $14.2 billion in 1992 to $12.8 billion in 1996. The already limited inflows of private capital are also declining.

Commodity prices on international markets continue to fall. Over the past year, the prices of quite a number of primary products dropped by more than 10 per cent, bringing heavy losses to many African counties.

These facts show that the major goals set in the New Agenda are still far from being reached. The accelerated economic globalization process has not brought African countries their fair share of benefits. To the contrary, its negative impact has proved costly to them. Africa is faced with the clear danger of being marginalized.

Economic globalization means that interdependence among the world's countries has grown to new levels. Sustained and healthy economic development in Africa is an important condition for the continued stability and prosperity of the world economy, and is thus in the long-term interest of the international community as a whole. The international community should dedicate itself to establishing with Africa a partnership for development for the twenty-first century, providing strong support to Africa and helping African countries out of the vicious circle of economic underdevelopment.

African countries have emphasized on numerous occasions that what Africa needs is neither preaching nor new programmes or plans of action. What Africa needs is real action. Concrete steps should be taken to help African countries solve the key problems that are holding back their development efforts. The international community should act in the following ways.

The first is to increase official development assistance to Africa and loosen the conditions placed on such assistance, so that African countries can use the resources more effectively in accordance with the needs and priorities of their own economic and social development. The second is to step up implementation of measures such as the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative, and relieve in real terms the debt burden of African countries. The third is to remove trade barriers targeted at the developing countries, to ensure greater market access for African products. And the final way is to encourage more productive investments and technology transfers, with a view to helping African countries improve their economic structures and enhance their competitiveness in the globalization process.

The United Nations should continue to play a pivotal role in promoting development in Africa and in the effective implementation of the New Agenda. Relevant institutions within the United Nations system should contribute to the development of Africa by devoting sufficient resources to this effort, and by formulating and implementing practical assistance programmes in the light of the specific characteristics of given African countries and of their priorities for national economic development.

An important part of China's foreign policy is to strengthen cooperation with Africa. Such cooperation is beneficial to both sides. Over the decades, we have received the valuable support of the great majority of African countries in many fields. At the same time, we have endeavoured, within our capacity, to help Africa in its economic and social development process. We are delighted to see that, in recent years, the mutually beneficial cooperation between China and African countries has been deepening, with more emphasis on achieving concrete results. The forms taken by our cooperation have also become more diverse. China will continue to support the efforts of African countries towards economic and social development.

We have already achieved concrete results with a number of assistance programmes; we have created employment opportunities for Africa and have provided market access for its exports. Even though China faces economic difficulties of its own, it will continue to support the economic and social development efforts of African countries. We shall moreover make our own contribution to the attainment of the goals set out in the New Agenda.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his progress report on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) since the mid-term review in 1996. The report, as contained in documents A/53/390 and A/53/390/Add.1, focuses on activities undertaken by the organizations of the United Nations system in the context of UN-NADAF; in our view, it is comprehensive in its coverage, while highlighting some critical issues.

We are heartened to note that there have been some positive signs for the development of Africa, particularly in the economic sphere, to the extent that some have even boldly referred to these changes as reflecting an African renaissance. In a situation where the problems are enormous and almost insurmountable, small steps forward can be a cause for great optimism.

The report indicates that, compared to the early 1990s, twice as many as African countries — some 40 of

them — have recorded growth rates of 3 per cent or more. In fact, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the average annual growth rate for the continent is currently between 4 per cent and 5 per cent, and per capita incomes are on the rise. Further, the report indicates that foreign direct investment flows have been significant in a number of African countries, increasing by some 6 per cent since 1995. There are other, qualitative, changes which have helped to create a more attractive environment both for capital flows and for official development assistance.

However, despite these upward trends, which are indeed salutary, African development has to be looked at against the backdrop of decades of economic stagnation and decline, which must now be reversed on a sustained basis for Africa to reach a take-off point towards sustained development, bearing in mind that it is estimated that a minimum growth rate of at least 6 per cent per annum is required if Africa is to avoid marginalization.

The new-found optimism on Africa has also to be looked at against a backdrop of some underlying weaknesses in the African economies, such as inadequate savings — averaging 18 per cent as against a minimal desirable rate of 25 per cent — and dependence on a narrow base of export commodities, coupled with a heavy debt burden. From the perspective of Africa being the continent with the highest debt-to-export ratio, the recent positive economic performance would therefore appear to be rather tenuous; it calls for greater efforts from both the African countries themselves and other international partners. In this context, my delegation reiterates its support for the Secretary-General's recommendation in his report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871) that all remaining official debt of the poorest African countries should be converted into grants by the creditor countries.

As far as implementation of UN-NADAF is concerned, Malaysia welcomes the move last June to make the Secretary-General's System-wide Special Initiative on Africa the implementation arm of UN-NADAF. This would certainly help in terms of giving coherence and enhancing coordination, not just within the United Nations Organization but among the donor community as well. UN-NADAF, as we all know, is an international commitment that was made to support Africa but that had an inherent weakness in that there were no targets or goals. However, the Special Initiative overcame this by focusing on seven major areas. To evaluate the success achieved in these specific areas, targets, goals and performance indicators should be explicitly spelt out. The financial resources that are to be mobilized for each programme should also be indicated. More countries should also be covered under the Special Initiative on Africa programme.

While we recognize the important roles that are being played by the agencies of the United Nations system — including IMF and the World Bank — in realizing the objectives of UN-NADAF, much more remains to be done. In this connection, Malaysia agrees with the conclusion of the Secretary-General's report to the Security Council on Africa, which stated, *inter alia*, that peace and security are inextricably linked to the promotion of development. Clearly, political stability is a critical factor in attracting foreign direct investment and the capital essential for development and growth. This surely will have a direct impact on the implementation of UN-NADAF.

The Assembly has heard many States Members of the Organization call for an end to the current decline in official development assistance. However, such a prospect, or that of an increase in that assistance, seems, under present circumstances, rather unlikely. The official development assistance flows to Africa, as stated in the addendum to the Secretary-General's report, declined from $14.2 billion in 1992 to $12.8 billion in 1996. However, private flows to Africa increased from $3.1 billion in 1992 to $6.8 billion in 1996, with a high of $9.9 billion in 1995. It is worth noting that official development assistance for the whole of Africa in 1992 was less than what a single country in East Asia obtained in the "bailout" during the current financial crisis.

While official development assistance is important, it is Malaysia's belief — as stated by our Prime Minister, Mr. Mahathir Mohamad, at the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD II) on 19 October 1998 — that the way forward for development of Africa is not through aid, important as it is, but more importantly through foreign direct investment and through the acquisition of skills and technologies. Therefore, it is critical that the organizations of the United Nations system, in their effort to carry forward the aims of UN-NADAF, pay particular attention to actions that would lead to the creation of an enabling environment for foreign direct investment flows, both in terms of infrastructure development and institutional capacity-building. At TICAD II, our Prime Minister also unveiled a trilateral arrangement involving Japan, France and Malaysia to assist African countries in their development.

Malaysia and Africa have, over the last four decades, maintained very cordial and longstanding ties covering a broad spectrum of relations. In recent years there has been a major boost in our relations with Africa, with significant increases in trade and investment as well as in terms of air and sea links. Malaysia-Africa cooperation is today poised to experience forward and positive momentum. We look forward to the emergence of a new Africa as a promising region of growth — an Africa that through an infusion of fresh ideas, capital and technology would be an increasingly important partner in trade and development, particularly in the context of South-South cooperation and in the context of economic globalization.

Mr. Jele (South Africa): My delegation would like to associate itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

South Africa regards the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s as one of the key elements in addressing Africa's development challenges in the 1990s. Also crucially important is its appraisal and the follow-up to its implementation after its mid-term review in 1996. To this end, we commend the Secretary-General's report submitted under this item and hope that it will contribute not only to the Agenda's full implementation, but also increase its impact and eventually result in a successful final intergovernmental review in the year 2002.

As proposed in the report, in order to secure an effective and successful follow-up and outcome of the Agenda, we believe that it is crucial for the General Assembly to monitor and evaluate the programme again before its final review.

My delegation is deeply concerned about the economic condition of the continent, particularly its continued lack of economic development in spite of concerted efforts by the international community. For this reason, we have followed very carefully deliberations and efforts to address this problem. We noted with interest the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole on the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the New Agenda as well as subsequent follow-up processes through various United Nations bodies.

In line with the mid-term review and the deliberations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Administrative Committee on Coordination, it is our view that the importance of the linkages between the New Agenda and the System-wide Special Initiative on Africa should be enhanced to ensure a comprehensive outcome.

These linkages should, of necessity, also take on board concerns and recommendations covered by the Secretary-General in his report to the Security Council and the General Assembly on sources of conflict in Africa, their prevention and the need to lay a firm foundation for durable peace and economic growth after their resolution. This process should also be underpinned by effective follow-up action to evaluate further progress.

Poverty eradication is a prime concern of many Governments in Africa. In line with the review, African Governments continue to develop poverty eradication strategies that are broad-based and cross-cutting. These initiatives straddle areas such as economic reform, the environment and sustainable human resource development. However, such efforts still need to be underpinned by the support of the international community in ensuring that the objectives of the New Agenda are realized.

Since the mid-term review, many African countries have continued to endeavour to place their economies on a sound footing. Such measures also include the maintenance of stringent macroeconomic policies, economic reform, good governance, constitutional government and democratic institutions. As a result, the continent has had modest, though encouraging, economic performance indicators overall. These include positive growth and low inflation rates, as well as a reduction in deficits.

We welcome the submissions made by various organizations of the United Nations system regarding the implementation of aspects of the New Agenda within their respective areas of competence. While mindful of the challenges and limitations under which most of such efforts are made, we note that there is still much scope for improvement.

Our deep concern, however, is with the problems encountered as a result of the external environment, problems that very often frustrate and undermine constructive efforts in the implementation of the New Agenda. A particular constraint in this context is the negative impact of globalization on the fragile economies of Africa and the progressively declining financial resource flows to the continent.

Despite the opportunities offered by globalization and liberalization, the phenomenon often negatively affects the extent to which most developing countries with liberalized economic systems are able to exercise

independence in policy formulation and execution. We therefore regard the Secretary-General's report and its addendum on this item as useful tools in stimulating discussion in order to find a lasting solution.

The New Agenda seeks to lay a strong foundation for Africa's economic development, and for industrialization in particular. Africa's concerted efforts at attaining this goal continue in various forms and on various fronts. However, globalization has not helped this process much. In particular, it has not fostered an enabling climate for Africa's internal economic industrial integration, which is a crucial starting point for the attainment of this goal. Given the dynamics of the international economic system, African economies are under constant pressure to liberalize. The downside is that, do that as they may, they continue to be marginalized and remain vulnerable to increased competition from more established and advanced economies.

To mitigate these problems it is vital that the objectives of the New Agenda should receive universal support in order to underpin Africa's own efforts to achieve regional economic integration, as such integration would go a long way towards building and strengthening the continent's capacity to compete.

There is an overriding need for improved coordination and feedback between the processes at the global and the operational field levels. Countries also need to be closely involved in all aspects of their country programmes. This would also help in strengthening regular reporting on progress and simplify evaluation mechanisms. In this regard, we find the report constructive in identifying flaws in the New Agenda's reporting and feedback process and hope that concerted efforts to find a solution will continue to be made.

The need to mobilize and provide adequate resources is central to ensuring delivery of the objectives of the New Agenda. The mobilization of domestic resources also needs to be supplemented by the generous injection of resource flows from outside the continent.

For far too long developing countries have argued for the provision of adequate resources in order to make the critical break that is so crucial for Africa's sustained growth and sustainable development. We wish to reiterate the observation made in the report that, in order to achieve the development of Africa, the continent actually needs higher resource flows than originally estimated in the Secretary-General's report for the 1990s. This, in our view, would go some way towards securing a positive outcome for the implementation of the New Agenda.

We particularly welcome the updated version of this report, entitled "Mobilization of additional resources for African development: a study on overall resource flows to Africa", which has now been issued as an addendum to the main report, and we commend it to our developing partners in particular and to development agencies in general.

Mr. Kamal (Pakistan): We would like to convey our appreciation to the Secretary-General for presenting an analytical report, in document A/53/390 and Add.1, on the agenda item under consideration.

We would like to associate ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Africa is facing formidable challenges. To address these challenges, many initiatives have been launched by the United Nations, by bilateral donors and by the continent itself. The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s is an umbrella initiative that covers a range of priorities critical to the development of Africa. The progress on the implementation of the New Agenda has been very well documented in the Secretary-General's report. To say the least, however, the achievements have been outnumbered by the unrealized objectives.

Africa's heavy debt burden has increased by 2.1 per cent compared to 1995, making Africa the continent with the highest debt-to-export ratio. There has been a drop in the manufacturing sector, and Africa's share of the global market has remained low, accounting for only 2 per cent of world trade. Most of the increase in private capital flows to the developing countries has bypassed the African countries, which received only $6.8 billion in 1996 — that is, about 2.7 per cent of the total flows to the developing countries.

While efforts are under way to intensify the implementation of the New Agenda, the Secretary-General, we believe, has provided us with a comprehensive agenda in his report entitled "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa" (A/52/871). He has addressed both of the principal concerns of Africa, which are peace and development. They are deeply intertwined.

We will, however, address only the development dimension at this meeting.

To reverse Africa's marginalization in the globalizing world economy, our initiatives should be followed by concrete actions for the development of Africa. Here we would like to endorse the Secretary-General's comment that it is in deeds rather than in declarations that the international community's commitment to Africa will be measured.

While we agree with most of the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his comprehensive agenda, as well as regarding the implementation of the New Agenda, we would like to focus on the following priority areas.

First, we should endeavour to find a decisive solution to the unsustainable debt burden of Africa. The conversion of all the remaining official debt of the poorest African countries into grants deserves serious consideration. We fully support the Organization of African Unity's proposal for an international agreement to clear the entire debt stock of the poorest countries in Africa within a reasonably short period of time. This would release a considerable amount of resources which could be spent on human resource development.

A second area of priority should be enhanced and guaranteed access to the developed countries' markets, as well as improved regional cooperation. Trade facilitation and market access on a preferential basis would enable the African countries to embark on the path of export-led growth. The Organization of African Unity's institutional capacity to establish an African economic community must be further enhanced. Such a community would help in promoting regional and subregional integration, which would then promote economic discipline and sound macroeconomic policies.

Thirdly, Africa's overall industrial performance should be improved. An acceleration in the transformation from raw material producers to processors will have to be achieved in order to broaden and deepen Africa's manufacturing base. Africa should be provided with the requisite technologies and resources to undertake such a transformation.

Fourthly, increased investment in human resources will have to be made. We believe that human resource development holds a key to overcoming the challenges being faced by Africa. Despite our own financial constraints, Pakistan launched an Africa Programme 10 years ago. The Programme is primarily focused on capacity-building and human resource development. But to give impetus to such efforts, major investments in education, health, population and basic social programmes are required. A special fund for human resource development in Africa may be established.

Fifthly, effective mobilization of financial resources has to be addressed in a serious manner. The decline in official development assistance is inconsistent with the initiatives and policy pronouncements on Africa. Private capital flows are unlikely to meet the financial requirements of the African countries in the social sector and in infrastructure-building.

Africa would require $50 to $60 billion a year even to effectively reduce the problem of poverty. The goals of the New Agenda or the "Comprehensive Agenda" cannot be achieved unless we ensure sufficient resource flows to Africa. The recent recovery in Africa is very fragile and could unravel if not sustained with higher resource flows. The international community cannot, therefore, be complacent about the needs of Africa.

We believe that in order to achieve the best results we should have clearly defined goals and a clearly defined time-frame to ensure the implementation of the various initiatives launched by the international community.

We hope that the next review of the New Agenda, to be held in the year 2002, will present a much better picture than we have today regarding the state of "development" in Africa. Despite our preoccupation with the current financial turmoil, we have to ensure that Africa is not left out of the process of globalization. As in South-East Asia, events in Africa could well become determinants in the continuing health or otherwise of the world economy and of global society.

Mr. Sergiwa (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation would like to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77. We support the content of that statement. We also support the statement to be made by the delegate of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of African States.

The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/151 of

18 December 1991, genuinely expresses the interests of the international community in the African continent. It also reflects its solidarity with it in facing today's difficult economic situation and in finding the appropriate solutions. Indeed, we appreciate the efforts made by the Secretary-General in the implementation of the recommendations agreed upon at the Agenda's mid-term review, as reflected in his progress report in document A/53/390 and Add.1.

The report makes it clear that the United Nations system has achieved a great deal in implementing the New Agenda. However, it focuses attention on the continuing dangerous economic situation in Africa. As a matter of fact, the continent continues to face economic, trade and development difficulties. As a result, it contains the largest number of the world's least developed countries, countries with the least income and the heaviest debt burden in the world.

Compared to the world population, the African peoples are the most exposed to the dangers of poverty, natural disasters, armed conflicts and starvation, and they face a deteriorating health and educational situation. All of this occurs despite Africa's great potential in terms of human and natural resources and a huge potential which would allow it to increasingly participate in the growth of the international economy and international trade if this potential were used effectively and away from hegemony, away from continuous depletion of its resources.

This situation in Africa has taken different forms, the worst of which is the deteriorating state of external debts, which reached $323 billion in 1996. This represents 70 per cent of its gross national product this year. It is also reflected in the continuing decline of export primary-commodity prices and in the restrictions placed on the entry of Africa's exports to international markets. This has led to the marginalization of Africa's role in international trade, with its share not exceeding 2 per cent. Furthermore, it has led to the reduction of official development assistance and to the developed countries' failure to attain the internationally agreed target of 0.7 per cent or to provide additional resources for development in Africa. This is not to mention the negative effects of globalization, which serves the interests of the most powerful countries in the world and threatens the economies of African countries through hegemony from outside over Africa's raw materials and the transformation of its industries and institutions into dependencies.

As indicated in the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict in Africa, we all know that the colonial situation faced by African countries for a long time contributed to Africa's political instability and economic backwardness. Its human and natural resources have been depleted. Its markets have been monopolized in the worst possible way.

The countries that colonized Africa and brought it great trouble must help it by rectifying the mistakes of the past. They must cancel its debts immediately; they must provide Africa with financial resources and technical help in order to implement the New Agenda, which is a source of great hope for the improvement of the social and economic situation in the continent.

This support should not be seen as a substitute for the efforts of the African States themselves. The main responsibility in this situation lies with Africa. Indeed, African countries have adopted many initiatives and had tangible success. This support, rather, should be an expression of solidarity with the continent on the basis of shared responsibility, enhanced partnership and the renunciation of the policy of neglect and marginalization to which Africa has been and continues to be subject. We hold the position that this is Africa's right, in view of its legacy of colonization, plunder, deprivation, enforced backwardness, marginalization, suffering and exploitation.

Despite the efforts of African States to overcome their development problems, domestic conflicts and civil wars are increasing and the economic situation is worsening. The same holds true for the problems of refugees and displaced persons. The profits of development in Africa are spent on servicing its debts, which have been sapping its energies and reversing the flow of resources. If the developed countries have the sincere desire and political will to help Africa's development, they must seek to implement the internationally agreed targets for official development assistance. They must settle the question of Africa's external debts and refrain from any action that hinders the efforts of its States, such as the imposition of coercive economic measures on certain African countries by certain developed countries. In this respect, I refer to the measures imposed on my country, Sudan and Nigeria by the United States of America, which have obstructed the implementation of our development plans and aggravated the economic situation.

The United Nations mechanisms, development programmes and specialized agencies must all mobilize the necessary financial resources for Africa's

development. They must accelerate economic cooperation and integration at the regional and subregional levels, taking into account that cooperation among the countries of the South is one of the central pillars of the development process in Africa and of Africa's self-reliance.

The international financial institutions, such as the Bretton Woods institutions, must not impose new, unfair conditionalities on credits and assistance to Africa for political considerations imposed by certain States to serve their own political interests. Such conditionalities would deprive some African States of the financial resources they need to develop and to implement the objectives of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa, in the 1990s.

In conclusion, I wish to confirm that my country will pursue its efforts to meet its obligations vis-à-vis African development on the basis of our fundamental policies towards the continent and of our conviction that, if the critical economic situation in Africa is allowed to persist, it will destabilize international peace and security.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): We live in bewildering times. Economic experts all around the globe are puzzled. Most have been surprised by the developments of the past 18 months. Clearly, we now have a very dynamic global economy, which is being rocked by new waves with increasing frequency. To do well, our economies must learn to surf these new waves. Past performance is no guarantee of future success or future failure. The East Asian economies, for example, surfed well in the 1980s and early 1990s, but have fallen off their surfboards in the past 18 months. The need to learn from one another is even greater today. Each new wave, even as it presents dangers, also presents opportunities for us to surf better.

In this regard, it is encouraging that the progress report by the Secretary-General on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) presents some positive news. The report notes:

> "Since the mid-term review, African countries have deepened the progress that had previously been achieved in several fields, which has led some to speak of an 'African renaissance'. Indeed, compared to the early 1990s twice as many countries (40) recorded growth rates of 3 per cent or more. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the average annual growth rate for the continent is 4-5 per cent, and per capita incomes are on the rise. Moreover, inflation has dramatically come down, from 36 per cent in 1994 to 10 per cent in 1997. Fiscal deficits have been reduced by half in the past five years, and external current account deficits are down to 2.5 per cent of GDP. The flows of foreign direct investment (FDI), which have increased by 6 per cent since 1995, have been significant in a number of African countries." (*A/53/390, para. 11*)

The report, of course, qualifies this positive assessment with a documentation of continuing weaknesses and obstacles to growth, but on balance it gives ground for optimism. We commend the United Nations Secretariat for this excellent report, as well as for the addendum on mobilization of additional resources.

Singapore has taken a consistent interest in the economic growth and development of Africa. During my first posting as Singapore's Permanent Representative to the United Nations from 1984 to 1989, I felt privileged to be called upon to chair the informal consultations on the resolution on the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAAERD). The following year, Singapore was elected one of the three Vice-Chairmen for the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole on the Mid-term Review of UN-NADAF.

However, even as we try to help, we are consistently aware that the experience of a small city-State with no natural resources may not necessarily be relevant to a continent which is so richly endowed. Nevertheless, we have always opened our doors to all who wish to learn from our experience and have been pleased to welcome 27 African leaders, as well as several ministerial delegations, in the past decade.

These high-level visits complement the efforts we have undertaken to share our experience under the Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP). Since the launch of the SCP, over 1,100 officials from sub-Saharan African countries have attended courses in Singapore on a variety of subjects. We also participated in the recent second Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD II) that was held from 19 to 21 October 1998.

Given our small size and limited resources, Singapore is aware that, if we work on our own, awareness of Singapore's technical assistance programmes will not spread very far. We do not have the international networks to spread the word about the

courses available in Singapore. So, to generate better awareness as well as to enhance the quality of programmes in Singapore, we have established partnerships in technical assistance with other countries and international organizations. We call such partnerships "third country training programmes" and we have signed them with 11 other countries and eight international organizations. Singapore was one of the first countries to contribute to the Commonwealth Africa Investment Fund, which was launched by President Nelson Mandela in July 1996. Our High Commissioner in London, Mr J. Y. Pillay, is the Chairman of the Investment Fund.

Singapore also works jointly with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to extend technical assistance under the Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC) programme and the joint training programme for sub-Saharan African countries. The Singapore-UNDP joint training programme for sub-Saharan African countries will be conducting a course on export market development for a few countries. In addition, Singapore has established two- to three-year technical assistance rolling plans, catering to the specific training needs of South Africa, Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe.

To date, Singapore has been able to work with only 27 African countries. While we have as yet been unable to reach all 53, we would like to do more to include other African countries in our technical cooperation programmes in the near future. Singapore is exploring new ways and means of extending the reach of our technical assistance. For example, we have worked with Botswana in the area of productivity by helping establish the Botswana National Productivity Centre in 1995. Botswana Work Improvement Team facilitators were trained in Singapore in three batches over three years. Singapore hopes that the Centre will not only serve Botswana, but also become a premier training ground for productivity-related courses for the whole of southern Africa.

The private sector has also launched assistance programmes for African countries. In 1996, an African scholarship scheme was announced in Nairobi, Kenya, with the sponsorship of the Singapore International Foundation and the Standard Chartered Bank. We have also produced some publications on our technical assistance programme.

Allow me, in conclusion, to re-emphasize a point I made in my introduction. In the bewildering economic environment we live in, the need to learn from each other has become greater. That is why Singapore is continuing to learn from other countries even as it shares its experience with other countries. We have also found some conclusions in the Secretary-General's report on the New Agenda that we believe are relevant and applicable not just to Africa but to all developing countries. For example, the report highlights the greater need for regional economic integration, achieving good governance, strengthening the financial sector and reinforcing and accelerating economic liberalization. We believe that this advice is equally valid for all developing countries in the new economic environment that we live in.

Today, none of us can be absolutely certain which is the right road to take for economic development. The best way we can help each other is to share our experiences. In November 1995, when six African leaders visited Singapore en route to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Auckland, the Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr. Goh Chok Tong said:

> "Singapore learnt a great deal from other countries in the early years of our development. If we have done well, it is due in no small part to the help that we received from other countries. Not only did we learn real skills, but we also avoided their mistakes. We did not try to reinvent the wheel. If you think our experience is relevant, we are happy to share it with you."

Mr. Insanally (Guyana): I have the honour to speak, on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that are States Members of the United Nations, on agenda item 24, on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), including measures and recommendations agreed upon at its mid-term review. I do so in full support of the statement made earlier by the representative of Indonesia, which holds the chairmanship of the Group of 77 and China.

CARICOM Governments have long been pledged to solidarity with and support for Africa's economic and social progress, and the development of its peoples. Coming as we do from a similar colonial past, and linked by strong historical ties, the peoples of our region share many of the problems of their African partners, as well as their hopes and aspirations for a better life. Joined in a common struggle for political freedom and independence, we are now united in our struggle for economic independence, the eradication of poverty and a

prosperous future for our countries on both sides of the Atlantic.

As we consider today the implementation of UN-NADAF we are greatly assisted by the Secretary-General's report and its addendum, which provide a thoughtful overview of the progress made and of the problems being encountered in the process. While reflecting a measure of optimism about Africa's growth prospects, the report makes it clear that there is no room for complacency. Importantly, it highlights a number of areas of continuing concern, which require urgent attention both by the African States themselves and by the international community.

CARICOM countries welcome the advances made in the strengthening of democracy and good government on the continent. We also note with satisfaction that the period of negative growth in per capita gross national product in the 1980s and early 1990s has been succeeded in recent years by consistently positive growth in the region as a whole and in several individual African countries. However, it remains a matter of deep concern for us that growth rates, despite averaging nearly 4 per cent over the period 1995 to 1997, fall far short of the levels required to reduce poverty, and in some cases they mask differences among individual countries. Furthermore, as the Secretary-General notes in his report, even the present rates of growth cannot be sustained at current levels of investment. As a result, there is an urgent need for the mobilization of additional resources if the 6 per cent growth rate targeted under the New Agenda is to be realized.

Regrettably, current trends in resource flows to Africa are hardly encouraging. While global official development assistance levels continue on a relentless decline, having reached a low of 0.22 per cent in 1997, the continent's share of official development assistance has shrunk, presenting a very worrying prognosis for future international support. At the same time, despite progress in macroeconomic reform and liberalization of the external sector in many countries, Africa as a whole has managed to attract only very paltry sums of private capital, and these we see, are concentrated in no more than a handful of countries. These trends are exacerbated by an onerous debt burden, the servicing of which represents a considerable strain and drain on scarce development resources.

It is clear, therefore, that while some progress has been made to improve the African condition since the adoption of the New Agenda, the vicious cycle of underdevelopment in Africa has not been broken. Although the continent represents almost 22 per cent of the world's population, today it accounts for only slightly more than 2 per cent of world trade, a statistic which reveals a poor level of investment in development. Moreover, with extremely low gross national product, more than half of Africa's population lives in conditions of dismal poverty with little hope of real improvement. The signals of economic recovery, though positive, remain weak and could disappear if not strengthened immediately by international support.

Accordingly, we agree with the Secretary-General that the international community must do more for Africa. Failure to honour commitments already made could jeopardize the gains that have so far been achieved. As the Secretary-General rightly noted in paragraph 106 of his report in document A/52/871,

> "Concrete action must be taken, as it is in deeds rather than in declarations that the international community's commitment to Africa will be measured."

In addition, as we have suggested, new commitments may be needed to ensure that Africa's development is placed on a truly sustainable path.

In this context, CARICOM urges an increase in international support for Africa. We fully endorse the Secretary-General's call on Development Assistance Committee countries in general, and the G-7 countries in particular, to halt the decline in their official development assistance as a proportion of gross national product and to restore their official development assistance levels to previous historically high ratios within a mutually agreed but necessarily time-bound period. We also generally support the Secretary-General's recommendations for debt reduction and the increase of private flows to Africa. In this context, we welcome and encourage the process launched by the Government of Japan at the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) and the initiative taken by the Government of the United States in support of Africa.

For our part, the CARICOM countries have taken several steps to further our cooperation with Africa. Last September, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and representatives of CARICOM and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and their secretariats held discussions in Durban, South Africa, with a view to formalizing relations between the two regional groupings. They defined the following areas of cooperation between the two regions: forging a strategic alliance between

CARICOM and SADC to promote trade; technical cooperation on rules of origin and a common external tariff; the pursuit of post-Lomé IV negotiations; the exchange of technical expertise between the two secretariats; and the involvement of the private sectors of CARICOM and SADC to explore trade and investment opportunities, including air transport and tourism. CARICOM also intends to strengthen its links with the Organization of African Unity and other regional and subregional organizations on the continent. In the spirit of South-South cooperation, we intend to work together for the benefit of our peoples.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate CARICOM's view that international support for Africa's development should respond to Africa's own priorities and be based on African ownership of the process. Consequently, we feel that in the continuing international efforts to implement UN-NADAF, full account must be taken of Africa's views on what further needs to be done. Only in this way can we be sure that our initiatives and actions will result in sound and stable development for Africa.

Mr. Ndjemba Endezoumou (Cameroon) (*interpretation from French*): It is an honour and a privilege for me to address the Assembly in place of Mr. Martin Belinga-Eboutou, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Cameroon to the United Nations, who is at present in Yaoundé at the tenth ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. I have therefore been entrusted with expressing the views of the delegation of Cameroon on this agenda item.

The report before us, in which the Secretary-General requests new guidelines from Member States in preparation for the review and final appraisal in 2002, takes stock of progress made in the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. To this end, the first part of the document takes note of actions in the respective areas of competence of bodies of the United Nations system in connection with the recommendations resulting from the mid-term review of the implementation of the New Agenda.

It is clear that considerable efforts, which are described in detail, have been carried out in priority areas: acceleration of economic reform, considered by some an inevitable stage in the African renaissance, despite certain shortcomings; promotion of the private sector and of foreign direct investment, with privatization as the means for mobilizing resources; intensification of the democratization process and the strengthening of civil society, through which the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation will find its full expression; and the implementation of the concept of good governance.

Other priority areas have also received special attention in the report, such as the stock-taking of the various initiatives and measures for relief undertaken by the developed countries and the urging by the Security Council that creditor countries and the Bretton Woods institutions act to reduce the African debt burden.

Other areas include the facilitation of commercial trade and the opening up of markets, cooperation, regional and subregional integration, the environment and development, diversification of the African economies, agriculture, rural development, food security and all the different human facets.

The various efforts thus noted and the results achieved have been made possible by the sacrifices made by the Governments and the peoples of Africa themselves, with the decisive bilateral and multilateral support of friendly countries and international institutions. My delegation would like to take this opportunity to express once again my Government's deep gratitude to all of these partners. Cameroon and its people are particularly appreciative and mindful of the valuable and valued contribution all of these partners are making to our recovery efforts. Cameroon is sure that it can continue to count on them in the vigorous and composed pursuit of its programme of far-reaching economic and social change.

The second part of the report of the Secretary-General is, on the other hand, a kind of urgent appeal addressed to Member States regarding the major challenges that the United Nations New Agenda must still meet if we wish it to fully achieve its goals.

These challenges include, first, the economic and industrial integration of Africa into globalizaton. Until now, the report states, the globalization of the economy has been accompanied by a notable marginalization of the continent. That tendency is in fact likely to become more pronounced, for it is clear that the benefits Africa derives from world trade will decline by $1.2 billion annually at a time when other parts of the world can expect an estimated $30 billion to $40 billion in benefits in the year 2002. Moreover, Africa's trade represents a mere 2 per cent of world trade. The solution would seem to lie in an

expansion of production in the African countries, in a spirit of complementarity, in order to promote economies of scale.

Secondly, there is the challenge of streamlining coordination and complementarity between the global political process and operational activities in the field.

My delegation supports the rationalization effort undertaken by the Committee for Programme and Coordination concerning the conceptual framework for United Nations action to be taken in view of the proliferation of initiatives within our Organization and for better follow-up in the field. Moreover, it shares the idea of the establishment — as has been done in connection with the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the Beijing Conference on Women and the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development — of an intergovernmental assessment mechanism, to meet at regular intervals.

The third challenge includes the mobilization of financial resources. Here the weakness of domestic savings in African States is compounded by a drastic decline in international capital flows towards Africa. Financial assistance for the continent, be it in the form of official development assistance or private investment, has today, unfortunately, fallen victim to erratic capital flows, which in real time move towards more profitable financial sites or towards stronger markets. In fact, if nothing is done to check this trend, another crisis will be looming on the horizon for the African economies.

My delegation fully supports the report's proposals regarding the last two challenges, namely, the establishment of mechanisms for follow-up, control and assessment within the Secretariat of the United Nations, along with the possibility of an independent assessment, and the need for harmonization of the international and bilateral initiatives under way.

Africa, once again, and certainly not for the last time, is the focus of the work of our Organization. Consideration of agenda item 24 after the high-level meeting and the meeting devoted to the causes of conflict in Africa attests to the interest of Member States in that continent. My delegation deeply appreciates this readiness to assist in the search for solutions to the various problems facing Africa. In that connection, we reaffirm our support for the various approaches set out in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

Let me recall a number of facts. All statistics are in agreement that the population of Africa is approximately 80 per cent rural; that the African economy is primarily based on agriculture; that women constitute more than half of the population of each African State; that young people constitute nearly two thirds of the population; that poor infrastructure, particularly in the area of transportation, is a serious impediment to African development; and that, all else being equal, the thing most commonly shared by the majority of African States is poverty. Thus, any plan for solving the problems of the continent must integrate the human dimension both as a starting point and as an objective.

To be sure, structural reforms are helping to improve the socio-economic environment. But theirs are short-term goals that in many cases involve only institutional economic actors; they address concepts whose benefits and merits the vast majority of African women and young people and rural and even urban populations want to see reflected in their daily lives. The improvement of the quality of life of these social groups thus appears in all respects to be a decisive factor and a potential catalyst for the development process in Africa.

In the view of my delegation, intensive action is needed; this means that African human beings, with all their dimensions and all their problems, must be the focus and the driving force for development, and must not be considered in passing or as a mere tactical factor.

It was with that conviction in mind that the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Cameroon, addressing the Assembly on 30 September 1998, recalled the commitment of President Paul Biya to making the fight against poverty the highest priority of his first seven-year term of office.

Because of its unfortunate situation, Africa provides vast opportunities for joining together in combat. In that context, the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s would gain by encouraging interactive dialogue among the various stakeholders — more diverse today than in the past — so that we can together find the right responses to African problems.

Ms. Montoya (United States of America): I have the honour to address the General Assembly on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). The nations of Africa and the international community

face many challenges. None is more important than working together for sustainable development so that poverty can be reduced and a sense of hope restored. In this regard, the United States endorses the report and recommendations of the Secretary-General on the mid-term review of the New Agenda. We welcome in particular the news of increased economic growth, reduced inflation and the rise in per capita incomes on the continent as a whole, despite the conflicts taking place in some countries. We also welcome the linkages being established between the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa and UN-NADAF, as well as the outcome of the second Tokyo International Conference on African Development. This is an integrated effort, a reflection of a more focused, more effective United Nations.

More must be done. Although some African nations have made substantial progress in economic recovery, these gains are threatened by the international financial crisis as well as by weather disruptions. As the Secretary-General's progress report highlighted, more work needs to be accomplished on the promotion of private sector and foreign direct investment, democratization, strengthening of civil society and debt relief. The debt burden of many African countries and the drag it creates on development have been amplified by the overall slowdown in global economic activity. We agree with the Secretary-General's assessment that this is an area that clearly needs to be addressed with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

We would like also to note the emphasis placed by the Secretary-General on the concepts of ownership and global partnership in this effort. As President Clinton stated here just one month ago, globalization of the world's economy is a reality; it brings challenges as well as opportunities. We are all interlinked through trade, commerce, travel and communications. The actions of one country have repercussions on others.

National ownership and global partnership are the keys to UN-NADAF and the Special Initiative on Africa. The mid-term review of UN-NADAF indicated that Africa has begun to take important steps to address problems of sustainable development, environmental degradation, the advancement of women, health and infrastructure through the many United Nations agency services and regional conferences available. This consensus on development policy takes into account a globalized economy. The New Agenda for the Development of Africa provides the policy framework required to accomplish our mission, while the Special Initiative develops that framework and places it in an operational context.

It is important to build development programmes upon the priorities for national development set at the country and regional levels, as well as in keeping with the international community's consensus agreement on how United Nations resources should be directed. Coordination among national officials, Africa's own development experts, specialists in the development community and the United Nations at the field level is essential to develop pragmatic, reality-based initiatives. In many strife-afflicted countries, a key challenge is to convert emergency assistance into sustainable development programmes.

Africa faces daunting problems. Many countries continue to suffer from civil strife, high population growth rates, a lack of transparency, unsustainable debt burdens and minimal investment, both foreign and domestic. Our response, in our own bilateral and multilateral development efforts, is to work more often with the stakeholders and increase the focus on African ownership of the development process. The United States will continue to support empowerment in our bilateral and multilateral development assistance programme.

Good governance, accountability, transparency, restraint, the rule of law and an active civil society are elements of a successful strategy. International support for capacity-building is a component which the United Nations can provide. Dialogue among all stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, is also a key to progress. This year's triennial policy review of United Nations operational activities for development is an opportunity to improve the delivery of United Nations technical assistance and to focus resources on the least developed countries, many of which are in Africa.

The United States believes we are seeing important, promising signs that the international community is aware of the changing tide in Africa. We are grateful for this opportunity to express our support for the progress that has been made and to highlight the challenges ahead.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.